

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH NATURAL APPROACH

Erbin Tinambunan*

Siti Aisah Ginting**

ABSTRACT

This study deals with improving students' achievement in reading comprehension through natural approach. The objective of this study is to investigate whether there is any significant improvement of the students' achievement in reading comprehension when it is taught by using natural approach. The subject of the study was Grade XI students of Nasrani 3 Private Senior High School (Sekolah Menengah Atas Swasta Nasrani 3) Medan. There were thirty one students. They were taught by using Natural Approach. The instrument for data collection were teacher made test, observation sheet and questionnaire. The techniques of data analysis applied were quantitative and qualitative. In analysing the data, the students were given three reading tests namely, Orientation Test, Test Cycle I and Test Cycle II. The mean of the students' score for the first reading test as Orientation test was 51.61 the second reading test as Cycle I test was 66.61 and the third reading test as Cycle II test was 76.61. The total percentage of the improvement from the first reading test to the third was 77.41%. the conclusion is that the procedures of natural approach can improve the students' achievement in reading comprehension. The qualitative data shows that the students were enthusiastic and interested in reading comprehension. It is suggested that teachers should apply Natural Approach as one of the media in improving students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading, Natural Approach, classroom Action Research.

INTRODUCTION

The Background of the Study

Language is a code whereby ideas about the world are represented through a conventional system of arbitrary signals for communication (Bloom and Lahey 1978). Language is simply a means of communication and that human intelligence is the result of the rapid growth and unusual size of human brains (<http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1995-98931-000>). Based on the meaning of language above they concluded that language is a tool for communication. We can not live without language because to live we are need communication with the other people. In order to make the communication runs well we have to master the language skills.

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning language besides listening, speaking and writing (Kustaryo 1988). It is certainly not easy to present the English reading to Indonesian students whose language system is different. Reading in their own language is much easier than that of the language learned because they have mastered the vocabulary and the structure of their own. As reading plays an important role in language learning, it would be better that this teaching is wisely done. To understand a text the students must have a good command of the vocabulary of the target language. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what the text meaning is. Writing is an act of discovery, of communication, of joy. It connects us to work, to culture, to society, to existing knowledge, and to the meanings of our lives.

Based on the writer's experience during his teaching practice on PPL (Teaching Practice Program) in Senior High School(2010). It was found that the students' reading ability was still low. The students faced many difficulties in reading texts. They often failed to comprehend the reading texts because they are lack of vocabularies and reading technique. Beside that, problems came from the teacher's technique and strategy in teaching. During the writer's observation, he found that the teacher still applied a traditional method, the teachers asked the students to write things in their exercise books freely, to read the texts in their heart and open dictionary anytime they stuck on using words that they didn't know. It caused the students bored and not concentration on learning. So, they are could not gain the purpose of reading.

This problem, can be solved if the teacher would like to create their teaching by change their strategy in teaching process and should consider the most effective and creative language teaching strategy in teaching reading skill. Teachers is one the most factors influencing the success of learning English.

An Approach may be one the solution to improve teaching process. Approach is a correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. There are some approaches in teaching they are lexical approach, and Natural Approach. Lexical approach in language teaching refers to one derived from the belief that the building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, functions, notions, or some unit of planning and teaching but lexis, that is, words and word combinations(Richards 2001) . Natural approach is a philosophy of language teaching, developed by combining it with

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. Some methods totally depend on the teachers as the source of knowledge and directions (Richards 2001). Teachers should be a motivator for their students.

Learning reading comprehension by using natural approach is one of the alternatives in teaching reading process. The Natural approach is a philosophy of language teaching, developed by combining it with Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. In Natural Approach the emphasis is on the exposure of the target language. The exposure is often called input. The Natural Approach is meant to provide comprehensible input. This can be done by discussing topics of interest, games, tasks, and the like. In learning teaching processes, language learners may respond in either the first or second language (Setiyadi 2006). The natural approach is aim at the goal of basic personal communications. And also the natural approach has been shown to improve reader understanding, and their ability to recall information from the reading text. In other words, the reader are more likely to learn and to learn more of the material they are reading. When use the natural approach students must get the information based on what they are like. This natural approach can effectively increase the students' comprehension of the text to be read.

The same realated research was conducted by Perangin-angin (2009). She concluded that there was an improvement in teaching learning process by doing natural approach in reading comprehension. Based on the result of her study, she concluded:

1. There is an improvement of students' reading comprehension if it is taught by Natural Approach. It is showed by the mean of the students: pre test (46.44), cycle I (56.66) and cycle II (66.77)
2. The students felt more enjoyable and interested in learning reading comprehension by using natural approach. It is showed by their enthusiasm in reading comprehension in the two cycles and their responds while they were asked about the natural approach.

These result was not too significant because the improvement that she got by doing two cycles only 20.33. I saw her action in her lesson plan, she made it too simple that is why the result was not too significant. If she did it not as simple as she had done I think the result will increase. That is why I will make it more enjoyable and more interesting by doing action not as simple as she had done.

The Problem of the Study

Based on background of the study, the research problem is formulated as the following "Does students' reading Comprehension improved if it is taught by using Natural Approach in language learning"?

The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out whether natural approach can improve students' reading comprehension.

The Scope of the Study

There are four level of Reading Comprehensin namely Critical, Creative, Interpretative and Literal reading. This research only focuses on literal and interpretative reading. There are some approaches can be applied in teaching

learning process namely lexical approach and natural approach but in this research the study is focussed on the use of natural approach in learning reading comprehension.

The Significances of the Study

The result of this study is expected to be useful and meaningful for:

1. The candidate of English teachers, as an input for them when someday they go to field of teaching English in the classroom.
2. The teachers to adopt this teaching strategies to improve their students reading comprehension.
3. Those who are interested in doing research related in this study.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of reading is to exchange the information of the idea between reader and the author. It means that the reader has to comprehend the meaning of the text being read. It is impossible if the reader only reads the text orally or silently without knowing the idea or the information of the text.

Teaching reading is sometimes considered a simple process. The success of the teaching reading is depending on the way or the technique that is used in teaching and learning process. Because of that reason, the teacher should select the appropriate approach in teaching reading, and not only read but also understand about it. Natural Approach is one of the approaches, which is suitable to be applied in teaching reading. It can improve students' reading comprehension. Because in this approach the learners should be as relaxed as possible in the classroom, and the learners get English not only from their formal education (school) but also from their everyday daily life, they can get it naturally. The teacher gives the material of teaching reading based on the topic of students' interests. Students will find that reading is more interesting and easier to do and to understand. As a conclusion, teaching reading through Natural Approach will have significant improvement of the students' reading comprehension.

THE RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

Research design is a detailed plan that includes guidelines for all the research related activities of the researcher (Dorney 2001:191). The researcher can use some ways when they are doing research, they are experimental research, library research and action research. Experimental research is commonly used in sciences such as sociology and psychology, physics, chemistry, biology and medicine etc. Library research is a collection of materials that has been selected and organized (usually by a librarian in consultation with a faculty member) to address the research needs of students and scholars. Action research involves the collection and analysis of data related to some aspect of our professional practice. This is done so that we can reflect on what we have discovered and applied it to our professional action. This where it differs from other more traditional kinds of research, which are much more concerned with what is universally true, or at least generalizable to other contexts (Wallace 1998: 16). Based on the definition above can be concluded that research is the process of collecting the data. In doing this research the researcher used action research to get the data.

Research could be divided into two broad categories qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research is a key form of research in education, the findings such projects frequently play a central role in shaping policy and practice (O'Donoghue 2003). Quantitative research is consists of those in which the data concerned can be analyzed in terms of number (Best 2002). The writer

used the quantitative and qualitative research in doing the research to describe the data.

There were four steps to conduct classroom action research namely:

1. Plan, involves thinking process and evaluating to reflect the event that have been happened and attempting to find out ways to overcome problem encountered.
2. Action, at this step, we think and data consider what action will be done, how method will be provided.
3. Observation is some activities that consist of gathering data to identify the result of action. Collecting data can be considered from several factors: students, teacher, interaction students and teacher. Observation process can be done by the teacher or assist by other such as others teachers, consultant, headmaster, act. If classroom action research involves other people, we called this research as collaborative action research.
4. Reflection is activity the fairness of data for doing some improvement and revision in other enhance the successful of teaching.

The Subject of the Study

The subject of this research was the grade II students of SMA Nasrani 3 Medan. To take the sample, total sample technique was applied. Students from XI-A class were taken totally as the subject.

Instrument of Collecting Data

The data of this research was collected by using the Quantitative and Qualitative data. It means the writer intends to apply qualitative and quantitative

approach. Wallace (1998:38) confirmed that quantitative was broadly used to describe what could be counted or measured and could therefore be considered 'objective' or qualitative was to describe data which were not amenable to being counted or measured in an objective way, therefore subjective.

Related to this study, the quantitative data used to find out the students' reading achievement. While qualitative data used to describe the students' performances and the teacher performances during the teaching learning process. In the other word, the qualitative data could give the information of the teaching learning process which useful for the writer to improve the teaching learning process.

Quantitative data was collected by using reading comprehension test consist of 20 items. Each of tests was enlisted in lesson plan in which sources of the materials were taken from the textbook as text to read critically while the qualitative data of this research was collected by using observation sheet, interview sheet and the students' diary note. Observation sheet was used to identify all the condition that happen during the teaching process while interview sheet and quationaire were used to know the feeling, the problem and other condition of students.

Procedures of Collecting Data

The procedure of data collection was conducted by administrating a cycle. The cycle had four phases, they are: Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection. Before conducting the procedure of collecting data, the researcher was

administered the orientation test to identify the basic knowledge of the students about reading comprehension. The four phases are explained as follows:

Cycle I

Cycle I was conducted with identification phase in order to find the problems that students faced in the class during teaching and learning process especially in reading. Identifying the students' problems was done by giving observation sheet to the students.

Cycle II

In Cycle I, there are some aspects that should be improved. The researcher decided the better way to make the media more effective in learning process. In this cycle, the researcher revised the plans appropriate the students' needs, did it in action, observed its process and reflected its result to make the conclusions.

Technique of Analyzing Data

Qualitative and quantitative data were used in this study. The qualitative data was used to describe the situation during the teaching-learning process, and the quantitative data was used to analyze the students' scores.

The qualitative data was analyzed from the interview, observation sheet, and diary notes to describe the improvement of the students' achievement. The qualitative data was analyzed to know the students' problems in teaching-learning process.

The quantitative data was analyzed by computing the score of the reading comprehension test. To find out the class mean score of every meeting, the quantitative data was analyzed by applying the following formula;

$$x = \frac{\Sigma x}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: X : The mean of the students.

ΣX : The total scores

N : The number of the students

To know development of the students' scores of each cycle, the mean of the students was computed, the students' percentage of the students who get up to 75 was calculated. To categorize the number of the students who got the score above 75 the following formula was used.

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P : The percentage of students getting score 75

R : The number of students who get the score above 75

T : The total number of students who do the test.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Quantitative Data

The quantitative data were taken from the score of reading tests administered in three times; Orientation test in the first meeting, test Cycle I in the end of cycle I and test Cycle II in the end of cycle II. The result of students reading scores can be seen in Table 1.

Table.1 The Result of the Students' Score

No	Students' initial	Orientation Test	Test Cycle I	Test Cycle II
1	AMT	30	50	75
2	AIT	35	55	80
3	ARS	50	55	75
4	AS	40	45	80
5	BRB	55	60	80
6	DRT	45	70	75
7	DCT	75	80	85
8	EEB	55	75	80
9	ESN	45	60	70
10	EGD	60	65	75
11	GEP	70	75	80
12	HA	50	55	75
13	IGS	75	75	85

14	IHG	65	70	80
15	JHB	60	75	85
16	JF	55	60	80
17	KL	45	65	75
18	KN	65	70	70
19	KS	65	75	80
20	KMP	35	70	75
21	NA	35	60	70
22	NAP	45	75	75
23	OS	55	70	75
24	RG	50	75	85
25	SS	55	65	70
26	SMB	40	70	70
27	SLK	35	60	70
28	SST	55	75	70
29	SUP	50	70	80
30	SP	55	75	75
31	WR	50	65	75
	TOTAL	1600	2065	2375
	MEAN	51.61	66.61	76.61

The increase of the students' score in reading through natural approach can be seen from the mean of the students score in orientation test until test cycle II. The mean in the test cycle II was the highest among the other tests

The students' score in those three tests were varied. The orientation test, the lowest score was 30 and the highest one was 75. In test Cycle I, the lowest was 45 and the highest one was 80. In test Cycle II, the lowest was 70 and the highest one was 85.

The Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet and questionnaire sheet. The observation sheet was aimed to describe the situation, the responds of the students and the teacher's attitude during teaching learning process and questionnaire sheet to describe the opinion of the students about the teaching learning process whether they more interested in that teaching learning process.

Observation sheet

The result at the end of first cycle were; (1) many of students did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation because they were not still interested yet in learning reading through natural approach, (2) many of them were still confused of how to apply natural approach. They felt confuse to predict the text base on the title, (3) some of the students were making noises during the learning process that disturbed the learning process. Some of them did not sit in their group and looked to another groups, (4) some of the students did not participate the group discussion, (5) many of them were not able to share in their group or team work

among the members of group because they were still confused to apply the procedures of the natural approach.

But in cycle II, the researcher found that the teaching learning process which was taught by natural approach ran well. The situation of teaching learning process was comfort and enjoyable. In this cycle, the teacher gave more attention to every group and moved around the group and helped them to work their group. Many of them became active and were able to find the ideas of the text. They gave their attention to the researcher's explanation and instruction. They gave good respon to the activities in the classroom.

The Research Finding

The result of the qualitative and quantitative data was get from each meetings. In orientation test the teacher found that the competence of the students still low. But after following the first and the second cycle the score and competence can be improved.

Competence	Orientation test	Test cycle I	Test cycle II
Score	1600	2065	2375
Mean	51.61	66.61	76.61
Number of the student got point up to 75	2	10	24
Percentage of the students got point up to 75	6.45%	32.25%	77.41%

The result of research indicated that there was an improvement on the students' achievement in reading comprehension, which was taught by using Natural Approach. It was proved by the data, which showed that the mean of the students in the second cycle (77.41) was higher than in the first cycle (66.61) and also in the orientation test (51.61)

The qualitative data that were taken from observation sheet and questioner sheet also showed that students interested in reading comprehension because, they could share their knowledge and their opinion each other and also find the definition of difficult words together. And also they were felt enjoyable in group discussion.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The finding that the students score continuously improved is affected by the using of Natural Approach in teaching reading text in the class. The conclusion was taken after analysing the data which was gained from the researched that show the improvement of the students' mean score for orientation test (51.61), test cycle I (66.61), and test cycle II (76.61). the improvement can also be seen from the increasing by the number of the competent students from orientation test (6.45%), test cycle I (32.25%), and cycle II (77.41 %). The improvement can also be found from the lowest and highest score in the cycle I and cycle II. In the cycle I the lowest score is 45 and the highest score is 80. In the cycle II the lowest score is 70 and the highest score is 85. From the improvement,

it is concluded that Natural Approach could improve the students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Suggestions

Related to the conclusions above, some suggestions are pointed out as follows:

- a. It is suggested to English teachers to use Natural Approach to improve the students' reading comprehension in reading text.
- b. It is suggested to students to apply Natural Approach while reading a text so they can comprehend the text easily
- c. It is suggested to readers to use Natural Approach in comprehending the reading texts.

REFERENCES

- Best, W. John and Khan, V. James. 2002. *Research in Education* .7th. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall
- Burns, C.Paul. et.al. 1984. *Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools*. 3rd .Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company
- Cadlin, N. Christoper and Hall, R David. 2002. *Teaching and Researching Reading*. White Plain :Pearson Education
- Dyer Jean Royer. *Understanding and Evaluating Educational Research*. London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company

- Heilman, W. Athur.et.al. *Principles and Practice of Teaching Reading*. 5th. Ed.
Bell & Howell Company
- Kustaryo, Sukirah. 1998. *Reading Techniques for college students*. DEPDIKBUD
- O'Donoghue Tom and Punch Keith. 2003. *Qualitative Educational Research in Action*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer
- Richards, C. Jack and Rodgers, S. Theodore.2001. *Approach and Methods in Language Teaching*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge University Press
- Setiyadi, Ag. Bambang.2006. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*.
Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu
- Suharsini, Arikunto. 2006. *Prosedur Penelitian suatu pendekatan praktik*.
Jakarta: Rineke Cipta
- Wallace, J. Michael. 1998. *Action Research for Language Teachers*. United
Kingdom: Cambridge University Press